



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Empowering students as co-producers of quality teaching

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Outline

- Introducing the University of Lincoln
- Our organising principle: co-production
- Students as producers of learning
- Students as producers of the University and quality
- Lessons Learnt

University of Lincoln



University of Lincoln

- Est. 2001
- 13,000 students
- Comprehensive university: strong arts, humanities, social science, computing, biological sciences base.
- Developing Science:
 - Engineering, 2011
 - Pharmacy, 2013
 - Chemistry, 2014
 - Physics & Maths, 2014



University of Lincoln

- One of just a few UK universities 'commended' during QAA external quality evaluation
- Top quarter for student experience
- 92% of graduates employed within 6 months
- Broad research excellence in medieval history; imaging technology in fighting cancer; design of combat ships; improving pre-hospital medical care; parliamentary reform
- Highlighted as an example of excellence in how universities can support UK economic growth (Witty Review, 2013)
- All in just over a decade...

Our organising principle: co-production

- Developing one academic community
- A student experience based on personal and critical engagement
- Young University focussed on development and growth – this helps achieve that
- Alternative to consumerist rhetoric



Students as producers of **learning**



Student as Producer

- Teaching & Learning Strategy called 'Student as Producer'
- Embedding research-engaged-teaching across the undergraduate curriculum
- Students critically challenging and producing knowledge – not just passively consuming it
- Mainly delivered through a 3 year transformation project, part funded by the Higher Education Academy (£200,000)

studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk

In Practice

research-engaged teaching:

- engaging in real life research practices and research-like activities
- pedagogical benefits of producing knowledge & outputs
- e.g. researching primary materials; creating artefacts; improving business processes
- central element: learning through working with academics to co-produce knowledge
- Student perspective: <http://vimeo.com/20835799>

Principles of programme design

Quality assurance system driving strategic change:

- Student as Producer is articulated through **8 principles of programme design**. They are broad and interpretable within each discipline.
- Each programme is approved / accredited internally and re-approved every 5 years. New **requirement that principles are embedded into all course gradually** as they are due for re-approval.
- Annual monitoring reports on each programme also used to draw out practice and encourage continual improvement
- **Institution-wide organising principle**

How is this creating quality teaching?

- Creating deliberate, critical reflection on pedagogy on mass across all departments...
- especially around the role of students and the relationship between teaching & research: not seeing them as conflicting, but complimentary: (Humboldt; Boyer)
- No one prescribed answer, it's bottom-up change
- Helps move the focus from teaching to learning – students become more engaged & critical; they get more from the learning
- Stimulating, academic environment for all

Students as producers of the **University and Quality**

Student Engagement Strategy 2012-16

- Extending the principle to students as producers of student learning (quality) and of the University
- Partnership / one community of staff & students
- Recognising the impact of support departments on the student experience and opening up to student engagement

“a collaborative endeavour where students are personally engaged in, satisfied with and proud of their time at Lincoln because they have been producers of their own and their peers’ experience in rich collaborative partnerships with staff.”



Developing Student Engagement

- Vision and buy-in demonstrated from senior management
- Student Engagement Team in the Vice-Chancellor's Office
- Each academic / support department is required to embrace and develop this agenda in their own way – student engagement plans
- 37 Student Engagement Champions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF1mvehRqrs>

Institutional Examples

- Students full members of programme approval panels; periodic school reviews; professional service reviews; interview panels for new staff
- Executive Board: Student Mentors / Shadows
- Students Consulting on Teaching
- Vice-Chancellor's Suppers and Receptions
- President of the Students' Union on the Executive
- Students' Union Awards for Staff
- Becoming better at using surveys: driving change



Departmental Examples

- Jointly redesigning courses
- Student Reps attending department planning days
- Re-inventing staff-student meetings: equality
- Re-design the first year project
- Student-led review of feedback on assessments
- Student Advisory Boards: Library, Careers, Student Services



Taking it forward

- VC priority: “push forward on our sector leadership in student engagement”
- Recognising the Champion role as an official role (workload planning)
- Staff development / leadership development
- Funding / stimulating innovation in departments
- Student transition & induction: engaging becomes the norm
- Engaging a changing, more international student body

How is this creating quality teaching?

- Staff are developing courses in partnership with students. Academic expertise of staff with expertise on learning and engagement of students.
- Students feel a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the University and their learning
- Students feel empowered to lead change as well as contribute to it ('peer mentoring' schemes for example)
- Positive, forward looking. This creates more committed students & staff.

Lessons Learnt

Lessons Learnt

- Cultural Change: Clear vision / principles from the top, detailed change driven from the bottom. Space for creativity on the ground.
- Clear connection between the two agendas, building on each other – so not appearing as a whole ‘new thing to do’ to staff
- Strong academic underpinning / credible
- Positive agenda: lots of celebrating
- Students as agents for change / co-producers of quality teaching



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